





LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

14

THE PROBABLE COURSE OF LEGISLATION

ON

POPULAR EDUCATION,

AND THE

POSITION OF THE CHURCH WITH REGARD TO IT.

BY THE

REV. DAVID MELVILLE, M.A.

HON. CANON OF WORCESTER,
RURAL DEAN, AND RECTOR OF GREAT WITLEY,
WORCESTERSHIRE.

London,

RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE;

HIGH STREET, | TRINITY STREET,

Orford. | Cambridge.

1868.

THE following remarks were written in October of last year, and laid aside. Every thing since, and most recently, said by those who form or reflect public opinion, has but confirmed their conclusions. Whilst some considerations, herein touched upon, and which cannot in a fair and full treatment of the question be disregarded, hardly received their due, if any, consideration, in a late Provincial Conference of much weight.

January 18, 1868.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

No question seems more imminent than that of Education. An Education measure must be the first-born of the Reform Bill; or, perhaps, twin-brotherhood would better express the relationship between them. Certainly the one was not fully forth before the other came and took hold of his heel, and it may be with the old promise, that "the elder shall serve the younger." "We must teach our future masters to learn their letters," was uttered before the Reform Bill became law; and this contained more, probably meant more, than the point of a sarcasm. The Education question springs at once out of the Representative. This is being daily recognized every where and by every one. With whatever variety of tone and expression, with all degrees of conviction, from a demand to an admission, every political voice, since the close of the Session, has been set to at least one common key-note, and that is the certainty, if not the necessity, of a wide measure of Education.

This kinship between the two questions will not be without its signs and tokens in points of resemblance. Such steps as that taken by Parliament last Session, not only are never retraced, but are apt to reproduce themselves, however strange may have been the result, or startling the process. Even in the particulars which are matters of unwelcome fact, rather than of clear firm opinion, they act as a precedent rather than a warning. Before we trace these points of similitude more closely, we may remark that one point of difference will only make the Educational question more imperative. Many people thought, or like at least to suppose they thought, that the Reform Bill was expedient because it was inevitable; the Education measure will be recognized as inevitable because it is expedient.

It were well, then, to consider any features in the late political question, which are sure or likely to characterize its correlative. Perhaps the extent to which individuals or bodies may affect the Education question will depend very much on the amount of recognition they give to this condition. What we would wish should be, must wait very much on what will be. And the opportunity for this reasonable reflection and possible influence may be now, and

only now. The claimant and the possessor stand here, as elsewhere just now in certain moving matters, face to face rather than side by side; and before the hostility becomes more determined, and one of the parties, at least, gathers force, it were well to think what we can preserve, through what we must change.

Regarding the question thus, the first thing would seem to be, that there must be a great abandonment of strongholds. The young mind must often have thought that too much was made in strategy of invincible fortresses. It is hard to see why some of them should not have been left alone in their invincibility. If any have shared this suspicion, it will have been confirmed by late political experiences.

Doubtless it must have seemed incontrovertibly absurd to push down such indications as a man's circumstances afford to his fitness for political responsibility at all lower, much less to zero, at a time when his circumstances were much in advance of his mental and moral condition. If the education and character of the lower social strata had outrun their prosperity, such process were intelligible—the property qualification might then reasonably be reduced. But when the proof is all the other way, and the necessities of life for the many have grown much more near the comforts, than ignorance has become intelligence or conduct virtuous—to lower the franchise test, be it rate or rent, seemed to be in direct violation of the rule which should regulate it. So also it may well have seemed an inversion of order in re-arranging electoral matters, to begin with the franchise and end at redistribution! Nothing could be clearer than that the reasonable process was to arrange, first the boundaries of existing constituencies, and see how many of the worthy but excluded citizens would thus get worked up; then redistribute seats, and through active but unrepresented centres absorb many more; and then at last turn to the franchise, after these wants were supplied, and see if there was still a residuum which it was desirable to regard by a lower standard. There these fortresses still stand, their guns all in position, and their works uninjured. Only they might as well never have been. The campaign has swept far beyond, passing them by; and, though it is no more use crying over turned fortresses than over spilt milk—it is well to note the fact, that one of the great lessons of the late Session is, that strongholds, however apparently impregnable, may be disregarded.

If this is true of holds, strong in themselves and strongly held, much more is it true of positions rendered weak by imperfect conviction or irresolution. Nothing but a very stout faith and clear intelligence will avail at all, even if they will. There has been so much acting without conviction and acting against conviction of late, that half convictions are out of court altogether, and whole convictions much discredited. And if the late result forces this consideration upon us, much more so does the process by which it was attained. Both must signally influence all action on such a subject as Education. The late Reform Bill became possible through the

confusion that had arisen between convictions and concessions. Whilst a few Reformers meant more than they ordinarily allowed themselves to utter and maintain, the great number meant really a great deal less. So a bold clear mind could, the opposition standing true to its position, rally, one year, the convictions of these last against their concessions; whilst a yet bolder, making his followers change front, could, the next year, rally their concessions against their convictions. Any question like Education, following close on such an experience, must feel its effects. Many who advocate prompt action in the matter of education, do not of course fully realize what they mean. But herein it will only be unreality, not insincerity; which difference but proportionably weakens the chances of delay, and the power of resistance. We may be sure that all checks, scruples, doubts, difficulties, or vague common-places, will scarcely gain audience against a simple clear expression of want, and a determination to supply it. Our wisdom then would seem to lie in trying to forecast these necessary or likely conditions, since any disasters or disadvantages can but be aggravated by being unforeseen.

Besides the medium through which we have said all facts and probabilities should be viewed, there are certain things we may certainly presume. We may feel quite sure that a good deal which heretofore has been matter of controversy will be taken as matter of fact. The case will be received as proven. The weary fight over facts and figures will be no more heard, or little heeded if heard. Nobody will care whether the 150,000 without education in London, or the 42,000 in Manchester, are strictly accurate statements, whether it is quite true that Prussia has 96 per cent., and England only 46 under Education. These data will be taken as sufficiently proved, under the quickened sense of the necessity. Those rocks and quicksands, too, by driving the vessel on which people often seem to try and escape the duty of pilotage, will be taken as sufficiently marked on the chart of discussion for avoidance. The distinction between instruction and Education will not be allowed to bar even instruction, where there is no pretence of the existence of either. Nor will the law of demand and supply be longer upheld for a case, in which its application can only produce a dead-lock, since supply must, like the water poured down a pump to encourage the up-stream, of necessity precede any demand whatever.

Then what we may call the axioms and postulates of the problem, will also be admitted as such. The value, for instance, of Education to the subjects of it, for their own sakes, and as members of Society and the body politic. Then, this value being admitted, the duty of its being realized somehow or other, will be admitted also. Some controversy may still arise as to where that duty lies, but the controversy will not be allowed to supersede action. Though, perhaps, theory might lay the duty at the door of the parent, the State will feel bound to take it up, rather than let it lie there unfulfilled. Then, further, the State having decided that Education on a more general scale must be, and that, failing the parents or others

fulfilling the obligation, it itself must do so, it will pass at once to furnishing the means and machinery by which its determination may be carried out.

It is not likely it will make or find much difficulty here. Up to this time, the State, or any thing like a National System, which alone the State properly can regard, has waited on Voluntaryism; henceforth Voluntaryism must wait on a National System. Doing as little violence as may be to existing methods and processes, and recognizing still such agencies, that will assert themselves under such regulations as it may lay down, the State will not any longer let the work come to a standstill any where, because such agencies are paralyzed or inoperative. The ground must be occupied by a System of its own, where not otherwise occupied.

The next step is not quite so certain, opinion being not yet fully formed upon it. Otherwise, it would seem to follow, that what the State determines to be necessary, and to supply because it is necessary, it would not allow to be rejected or disregarded; that compulsion, in short, would attend provision, the State finding its justification, if it wanted any, in its sanitary and maintenance laws. To be necessarily taught, differing only in degree, not in kind of obligation, from being necessarily fed or necessarily vaccinated, "You must go to school," would stand on the same footing, and be enforced by the same authority as, "You must go into the workhouse," or "You must take your child to the doctor." Perhaps Prussian and Saxon examples, spite of the recent marvellous results, will sway the conclusion on this point rather adversely, and the fear of assimilation to a despotic Government will outweigh evident advantages. Anyhow, though a sense of the need of compulsory Education has much grown of late, the public mind is not yet sufficiently disabused of the notion that it is an interference with due personal freedom to make compulsoriness a condition of an Educational System. This notion will be seen, sooner or later, to rest on that liberty of doing what one likes with one's own, which must be allowed to be either inapplicable or perforce to carry so much more as to be proved thereby to be absurd. In fact, this rule must give way somewhere. It is not allowed to the injury of a child's body, why then to that of his mind? or if to his mind, why not to his body?

It does not, however, much matter, as I think we shall see as we go on. The condition will probably take care of itself; and, with one or two more, may be left to the working of the experiment. If the State is in earnest about an Educational scheme, it will not allow it to become an idle effort through a false sentiment, or a practical counteraction.

But we are not left to any mere abstract or *à priori* regard of the question. It may be objected reasonably, that English legislation does not work in that way. We are not wont to meet necessities by anticipation, or deduce our measures from antecedent principles, however practical. We frame our legislation on such questions

like beavers build their houses, piece-meal as the wind blows; yet the pattern of the construction is pretty surely indicated as it advances.

First we close with Crime and Vagrancy before Ignorance, taking that first which presses us most sorely; but having, after some fashion and to some extent, grappled with these through Reformatories and Industrial Schools, legislation has already passed into the region of popular Education, and closing therein, too, first with a scandal, has shaped probably a wider measure by its modes of treatment.

The Hours of Labour Regulation, or Workshops' Act, which came into operation on the 1st of January, 1868, contains provisions which, however defective as yet, are sure to be very influential. It applies to all employments which can be called handicraft, whether in the open air or under cover, whether under masters or parents. Its Educational provisions are as follows:—

Whilst no child is to be employed under eight years of age, every child employed between eight and thirteen, is to attend school for at least ten hours in every week during the whole of which he is employed. Such child is not to attend school for more than three hours at one time, or five hours in one day, Sunday-school attendance not to be counted. This rule is not to be enforced during ordinary school holidays, nor if there is no school within a mile of the workshop or residence of the child. Certificates of school attendance to be obtained from the teacher by the employer, under a penalty not exceeding 3*l.*; and the parent of any child so employed to see that the necessary school attendance is fulfilled, under a penalty not exceeding 1*l.* On the application of the school teacher, the employer is bound to pay any agreed sum, not exceeding 2*d.* weekly, provided such sum is not more than one-twelfth the child's wage.

If Inspectors of factories find teachers either immoral, incompetent, or irregular in carrying out these provisions, such teachers are to be disqualified from granting certificates. However crude these provisions may be, and they are palpably so on some points—the particulars are very important, and are sure to characterize any more comprehensive measure.

If a hint of Household Suffrage, almost casually dropped by the Attorney-General in 1866, became the index of the franchise in 1867, much more will these educational conditions thus, however hastily, legislatively enforced, be found in kind in any larger measure. In fact, they only require to be extended to all children of the community, employed or unemployed, with such adaptations as those differing conditions of life would involve, and the thing is done. Without looking for extreme logical precision, or the adoption of any course, simply because it would seem a reasonable consequence from what had preceded, it is hard to conceive that restriction can thus be put upon labour, without compulsion being put upon neglect or indifference. Indeed, to force industry to be educated, whilst idleness might continue in ignorance, were too palpably absurd even

for our *laissez faire* mode of proceeding. That the unemployed are at school, must be made more than a fiction, when the employed can be brought there under legal enactment. Mr. Bright's Windsor labourer may not have been, as he alleged, without school opportunity; but his wilful hostility cannot be allowed to deny to his children that with which their honest labours may not compete. It would seem to be an *à fortiori*, that the ignorance forbidden to the employed, should not be permitted to the unemployed. If indigence and industry may not interfere with some amount of Education, it would be strange indeed if indigence and idleness may.

These points are only touched upon in passing, to show the way public opinion is gradually forming itself; and what is likely, as the question proceeds, to influence its more ripe and definite expression.

It will not be necessary that any educational measure should distinctly rule the point of detail on which we have just touched; nor some others which, while of great interest, are not of primary importance, and certainly are not ready for positive solution. But there is one among the practical items of this recent educational enactment, on which it may be well to remark, as it contains a truth which may help some day to settle a practical difficulty.

The competition of industry with Education is the only hindrance that is worth any thing but the most summary treatment. There are two points that entitle that hindrance to the gravest consideration. First, the circumstances of the parents—next, the nature of the work. Mr. Henley, in conceding lately the necessity of increased education, pleaded only that the exigencies of a certain kind of labour might be taken into account. It is undeniably true that the agricultural labourer scarcely can dispense with such increase to his income as his children may bring in. It is scarcely less true that, for certain field processes, juvenile labour is the best. On the other hand, any one acquainted with our rural districts must know that for no class are the elevating effects of Education more needed. Better houses and better wages would be great auxiliaries; but without Education they are little likely to attain either, or to turn them to any good uses, even if they did attain them. When this practical point comes up for treatment, the provisions of the Act of last Session, to which reference has been made, will be deserving of all attention.

The valuable fact recognized therein is, that whole-day schooling is not necessary. There is no reason why this part-time system should not be extended to agricultural as well as manufacturing pursuits—why, in fact, it should not be made the condition of all employment whatever, and forbidding out-door employment to any child under eight; enforcing alternations of work and school on all employed between eight and thirteen. Of course agriculture is more fitful than manufacture; but not so much so as to make school teaching at the same time impossible. The conditions might have to differ. It might not be necessarily a continuous daily attendance of half-time. There are some periods wherein the school might have

its claims undivided, and a good score of attendances then run up. From November to March, for instance, there need be little if any interference. At other times, evening classes might follow on the day's employment. Nor let any one fancy that such teaching for shorter periods is worthless. There is no doubt that our drawn-out teaching all day long is not advantageous. A dull sodden mindlessness does ensue on the prolonged din of the school process.

The kind of nature, mental and moral, of our lower orders, needs the quickening of change, else schooling becomes the dreariest of mechanical routines. But, if applied, as a relief from toil, the benefit is mutual, and there is a proportionate increase of knowledge through a more lively interest and keener intelligence. Any one acquainted with our Reformatory Schools, where a limited amount of school teaching is made the relief from farm-work, knows that the results attained would bear comparison with those arrived at elsewhere, through much longer periods of instruction.

But there is a previous point to that of the kind of Education, or the mode of enforcing and ensuring it. Whilst many writers and speakers are now-a-days dwelling *pro* and *con* on compulsory attendance at school, and even legislation has partially required it, it seems to have been forgotten that you must have your schools before you can compel children to come into them. No doubt the neglect of such educational opportunities as exist, is a grave matter—but that there are not opportunities, and that too where most needed, is a much graver; and it may be, that looking to what is really the first thing first, may do something, if not every thing, to meet those points which are really secondary.

How to supply schools, must precede how to fill or how to use them; and quite possibly these two latter questions may find their solution in the means necessary for meeting the first.

Supposing the demand to be sincere, that where schools are not they shall be, and that without delay; there can be little doubt whence they must come. Dark rural and dense urban populations, untouched now by the present system, are to have schools somehow; that will be the first thing laid down and decided. Can it be by the present system? Unless it can be promptly and at once, this will be answered in the negative, and other machinery found. Mere experiments or expedients will not be taken—that known as Mr. Walter's plan, for instance, who, because he keeps a very good school without Government aid, and a very good schoolmaster from sitting for his certificate, would hope to remedy the evil by poor schools under unauthorized teachers getting help from the State if they can; or Miss Burdett Coutts's plan, which postulates for its operation three clergymen, and three sets of school-managers, and three school-teachers, and three several schools, all of one mind, or rather, all prepared to adapt their minds each to the other; and the other poor little nostrums for poor little districts. Neither will permissiveness be sufficient. *Must* and *may* are not convertible terms; one cannot be the co-efficient of the other. This was one

main defect of the Bill of last Session, introduced by the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce. Where *must* is required, *may* does but invite opposition. Permissive legislation is but the expression of an infirm purpose.

Still this last offer of the sibyl will, in its main features, be the alternative to accept. This Bill recognized a rate locally administered as the source of supply. Perhaps that Bill, being only permissive, might be described merely as Voluntaryism, *plus* a particular machinery; which machinery, if it worked, would be found probably to carry more consequence than its inventors intended or hoped. I doubt whether any company could carry on both a voluntary and a rate-supported system, as co-elements of the same concern. Voluntaryism is for the maintenance of distinctive religious teaching—with a rate, this is scarcely possible. The rate-raised school might also be found incompatible with optional attendance and the children's weekly payments. The attendance might, that is, have to be compulsory and the teaching gratuitous. Still the idea involves the only possible solution of the difficulty. Where a school ought to be, yet is not now; there, failing any immediate erection of a school under existing regulations, the district should be required to raise a school by rate. It were almost easy now to *spot* the dark places on the map. Our army of inspectors, each in his locality, could supply much information on this head; and what was needed besides could readily be obtained. The whole process would, of course, apply with the greatest facility to towns. The country districts offer more difficulty through their scattered population, and the want of intelligence and earnestness which might characterize the local administration. The first point is a matter of strictly local detail; but to the difficulty a thin and scattered rural population may seem to offer to district schools, the old solution, *solvitur ambulando*, applies with a very literal force. Four miles is not an unknown distance for children to walk to school, though of course most undesirable; whilst it is certainly true, that children will attend often more punctually and regularly from some distance than if living close by. I have proved it by the same family under the different conditions. The latter point would have to be very strictly watched, and can, possibly, be only securely dealt with by the closest central supervision, under most stringent central conditions. This is supposing such districts had to be brought under rate-raised schools; but almost all such districts belong to some prevailing influence in property and opinion. As things now are, such might, if it liked, establish schools, and claim for them State aid on certain conditions. With the addition of one more condition, imperative and absolute whilst simple and considerate, these influences might still be recognized. That condition is a Conscience Clause. Under these conditions the Act should give opportunity for the ground to be occupied by the existing system, if it chooses to occupy it, within a certain prescribed time; if not, then a Board must be originated to raise by rate the required school under specified conditions. This

Board whilst administering its own fund, and regulating its own outlay, to be responsible to the Central Office in case of doubt, difficulty, or defect; such central department supplying some share of the original and annual cost, and exercising a general and, if it pleased, a minute and particular inspection, as a guarantee for the proper use and expenditure of the public funds. This really would be a much greater step than it at first looks. It is a great step really to say any where "You *must* have a school." Nothing like it has yet been. It really is much more than saying to a lot of children, "You must go to school," and probably will much more ensure that injunction than any direct utterance of it. The Central authority must require that the building be fit, the teacher apt, the success adequate, both in attendance and attainment, and must expect that these results be worked out by the local direction. Quarter Sessions would probably have to institute a well-chosen Educational Board, who would elect one or more competent Inspectors and Examiners, and, considering that the public itself is more enlightened in the question than it used to be, and that the Central Office could always turn its bull's-eye upon them, we might, perhaps, expect that the want to be met and the duty to be discharged would not be marked by the prejudice and ignorance which are often regarded as the characteristics of local administration.

But there are three points, which it would be disingenuous and unwise to avoid. They will still as much influence men's judgments as they ever have, and should be fairly faced and candidly treated. These three points have been already touched upon; they are,—1. The condition of attendance, is it to be optional or compulsory? 2. Are the schools to be free, or is payment from parents to be exacted? 3. Is there to be any religious element in the teaching; and if so, what?

My opinion on the first may be gathered from what has preceded. Compulsoriness is not nearly so ugly as it is made to look. It is one of those hobgoblins whose terrors fade away under contact.

As the *Augsburg Gazette* lately said, after a little use, the instrument loses its character. It is like a dip in cold water, or getting up early—only against the grain till practised. Those who denounce it as counter to the healthy play of free and spontaneous conduct, would probably find it merely that discipline which tutors the free spontaneity of action into systematic vigour. The tonic is only needed, but is needed, when the natural appetite fails; and it is for its restoration, not its destruction, that it is needed.

Still it perhaps need not be made an antecedent condition. It may be left to the working. The public and the parents are partners in the duty of Education. If the public, by Rate-aid and State-aid, secure schools for the parents, it is not likely to let the junior partner defeat the end, by a remiss attendance. A Rate-supported school will insure compulsion if it is needed, and the point may be so left. There will be no difficulty in getting legislative sanction if it is demanded.

So also on the second point, whether the teaching should be gratuitous, or the parents should contribute.

Without going through all the arguments, there can be no doubt that personally, socially, and politically, it is much better the parents should pay a fee graduated according to their circumstances. Besides the duty, all that encourages or tends to maintain the sense of responsibility, self-help, and independence, is most valuable. But all these are conditions of Voluntaryism. They are at least hard to maintain, when you say *must* to a man. "You *must* send your children to school!" could hardly be followed by, "and you *must* pay 2*d.* a week each for them!" The example in the Reformatory Act—whereby a magistrate can charge a parent for a child's maintenance according to his circumstances—is no example *per contrâ*, for that of course has in it the nature of a legal penalty. We do not think Parliament will be prepared to assert parental duty to that extent.

That it should not use its child's labour to the hindrance or exclusion of Education, is as much perhaps as it will be prepared as yet to assert. This point then would hang on the last. If Education is to be compulsory, it probably would have also to be gratuitous; but as the compulsoriness will not now be laid down, so neither need its corollary. In this particular, also, the measure may be left to its working. Inability or unwillingness to pay will not be let impair or hinder the efficiency of Rate-raised schools.

It may be remarked incidentally, that herein lies one of the difficulties to Mr. Bruce's Bill of last year. It proposed to take existing as well as the new Rate-schools under its operation. But if the new schools had to be free or gratuitous, schools in the same locality wherein children paid weekly pence could hardly hold their ground. It is obvious, too, how this consideration aggravates the whole question of the Rate, in its burden and its incidence, as the source of school support.

The third point—the religious element—cannot thus be left to the working of the experiment. No solution of it is likely to arise out of the mere proceeding. It must be settled in advance. Any body can see that a mixed body of Rate-payers would have but a hopeless bone of contention, if schools were required to be established and this question left open. Besides, there is the relation to the central or State Department, which cannot be left to an uncertainty. The Legislature must lay down certain broad and definite principles to guide both the action of the schools and their relation to itself. The same glance that can see this, can see also that this settlement cannot be on what is called the Denominational ground. It must be comprehensive, not exclusive, and Denominationalism is exclusiveness. Voluntaryism is the very life-blood of Denominationalism, and these schools are not voluntary. When you say to a community throughout a given district, "You must have a school, irrespective of all other considerations whatever," you mean that instruction of the people in sound useful knowledge is the primary idea, with which

nothing is to interfere. The terms then become comparatively easy. They must be those on which men of all opinions can conspire for this end. The simplest and surest of course would be those of secular instruction solely; but I do not think either that the requirements need be confined to this, nor that a Christian country with, as yet, a recognized National Church, would or should seem to enforce a bare secular system. It is no question of sect or dogma when a hope is expressed that religious truth, as derived from the Bible, in its plain, preceptive, and historical teaching, might still be an item of necessary instruction, since without it, it is hard to see how the character of the pupil can be formed, or the authority of the teacher upheld. Right and wrong must be maintained in a school. No minute, possibly, can pass in its curriculum without these being tested. A lie, a theft, a blasphemy must rest somewhere for their correction, and can rest nowhere but in the revealed will of God, sincerely reflected in the conscience and character of the teachers. The Bible must be an admitted subject of teaching, and the teacher a Christian man. All else may be left subject to such arrangement as each case may admit.

Thus, then, we arrive at what the State might lay down as the guiding conditions of these Rate-raised schools. Fit buildings—a fit teacher—and fit teaching. And fitness in these two last would mean, for the teacher, a Christian man as well as an apt instructor; and Bible as well as secular instruction. On these conditions, tested by inspection, State grants for building and support would be assigned; but henceforth the Central Office would know nothing of any other conditions. Denominationalism, in its own schools, must take care of itself.

What then would be the position of existing schools under such a system? Would the Church and the Denominations be thrown back entirely on Voluntaryism; and separation from, if not antagonism to, State alliance be thereby invited if not enforced? By no means! If the Church, to take the most unwilling, if not the only unwilling, religious community, would but be advised to sacrifice a shadow for the substance, and facilitate things by the adoption of a Conscience Clause in its Trust Deeds, there is no reason why existing schools should not remain exactly as they are, and increase and multiply if they can. But the first thing is to get the Conscience Clause obstruction out of the way, by agreement on its terms.

If both parties would but approach the question candidly, without captiousness or suspicion, this would not be difficult. The minimum of concession consistent with the complete liberty of conscience on the one side, and the complete liberty of faith and teaching on the other, would be a just and intelligible basis, which, violating really no principle of divine authority, would be found most politic in practice. On this may really hang the whole question as to whether or no the Church, in this matter of Education, and if so, possibly also in much besides, shall sink into a mere Denomination, or shall go on, with her hand firm and powerful on this source of influence

and usefulness. In justice to the position of the Church in the country, and its sacrifices for this work of Education, it would be perfectly reasonable to claim, that in case of each district now declared to be in want of educational means, and which would have to be supplied at once by Rate-supported schools, if not otherwise supplied—that if the Church gave satisfactory guarantees, which the form of Trust Deed would secure, for the *bonâ fide* supply of the proved want, she should be allowed, with all integrity of her teaching, save only such reserve as a Conscience Clause would carry, to claim such district as her own. Failing the Church, any Denomination which might happen to be locally influential in property and opinion, might in the same way meet the want and occupy the ground to the supercession of the Rate-raised schools. But failing all these educational bodies, schools, raised and supported by Rate on the conditions laid down, would immediately ensue.

This, we may expect, may be something of the horoscope of the coming measures. If it has been given rather a political cast, and been viewed as a consequence of late electoral legislation, it is not because the necessity or worth of such a step is to be measured by its mere bearing on the extension of the franchise; whilst it is through the medium of what has just passed, be it storm or sunshine, thrown forward into the future, that this question is to be viewed. Recent events have only gathered into a focus, and brought to bear on a question, the various forces of opinion and feeling, which up to this time have been unable to bring that question into port. That which gives the question its chance now, is something deeper and truer than a political necessity; whilst the educational cry, which has ensued directly upon an increase of political power, proves how comparatively valueless is the latter, except it passes through the rectifying medium of the former. In fact, the true solution of all other social problems, waits on the solution of this.

The moral of all this, as regards the State, is that its action will probably be very decided. It swept aside prejudices lately, when outside opinion was any thing but outspoken, and its own opinion any thing but clear. Its own steps cannot halt, then, in a case where outside opinion is firm and resolute. But what should be the attitude of the Church? As some would counsel and urge, should it—"for some blind glimpse of freedom"—forego so much of its nationality as still remains; become, like its sister in America, identical in sphere and position with all other Denominations—the sectarian representative of a special creed and organization, but with no constitutional recognition or obligations, and therefore with narrower opportunities and lesser interests? *Spero meliora!* Yet this is really the issue impending! Before it is too late,—and very soon it may be too late,—I can but trust no restlessness under State conditions, will blind my brethren to the consequences of voting themselves a mere Denomination. I willingly own the conscientiousness and single-eyed faithfulness of many whose feelings are repugnant to the Conscience Clause; but against a grievance, practically, as it would seem,

purely ideal, I would ask them to weigh well the loss to the Church in dignity and usefulness, if they consent to put themselves in relation to the State in this matter of Education, in the exact position of a mere Secularist. The Sibyl, with her last offer, is waiting at the door!

D. MELVILLE.

WITLEY RECTORY,
October, 1867.

THE END.







